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House of Representatives

The House met at noon and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. SMITH of Nebraska).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,

October 6, 2015.

I hereby appoint the Honorable ADRIAN SMITH to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

JOHN A. BOEHNER,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 6, 2015, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 1 hour and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 1:50 p.m.

GUN VIOLENCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. CICILLINE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. CICILLINE. Mr. Speaker, last Thursday, on the campus of Umpqua Community College in Roseburg, Oregon, nine innocent men and women lost their lives. They were killed, as so many have been this year in communities across our country, because a person with evil in their heart was able to get his hands on a gun.

This horrific event was the 294th mass shooting that we have seen in

2015, more than any other country in the world. So far this year, we have mourned nine parishioners who were killed during Bible study at their church in Charleston, South Carolina; two women who were killed and nine others who were injured at a movie theater in Lafayette, Louisiana; and a local television reporter and her cameraman who died covering a story outside Lynchburg, Virginia.

But there were thousands of other victims of gun violence. Their deaths have garnered less media attention, but they too deserve to have their stories told.

In the United States this year, more than 10,000 people have died and more than 20,000 have been injured during an incident that involved a gun. Each day an average of 92 Americans are killed in an incident involving a gun.

Yesterday the victims included the supervisor of a food market in Houston who was killed by a disgruntled employee; a 21-year-old father of two in Louisville; and a 23-year-old man and an 18-year-old woman who were killed outside New Orleans during a drive-by shooting. Altogether, nearly 1.5 million Americans have lost their lives to gun violence since the year 1970.

Mr. Speaker, I have no doubt that every one of my colleagues in this Chamber has spent much of the last few days thinking about and praying for the victims in Oregon and their families. I know I have.

But to put it bluntly, our thoughts and prayers aren't good enough, not for those who have already been killed and not for the 92 Americans who are going to lose their lives today, tomorrow, and every day until we do something.

Thoughts and prayers won't bring back the innocent men, women, and children who have been killed or heal the families that have been torn apart. Thoughts and prayers are no excuse for inaction and cowardice in the face of powerful special interests.

It is on all of us to do better than thoughts and prayers. It is long past time to take actions to reduce the threat of gun violence and to do all we can to protect our constituents from the ravages of this epidemic.

Earlier this year I introduced a package of three bills to get to the core of our country's problem with gun violence by focusing on keeping guns from children, criminals, and those who are severely mentally ill such that possession of a firearm would pose a threat to themselves or others.

The End Purchase of Firearms by Dangerous Individuals Act, H.R. 2917, requires that States provide information to the National Instant Criminal Background Check System on individuals who are committed to a mental institution or make a threat of violence to a mental health professional that demonstrates that this individual would present a danger to himself or others if armed with a gun.

The Fire Sale Loophole Closing Act, H.R. 2916, ends the practice by which Federally licensed gun dealers who lose their licenses for misconduct can convert their entire inventory to a "personal collection" in order to liquidate it without conducting background checks on their customers. Under the law, such dealers could transfer their inventory only to other properly licensed Federal gun dealers.

I also introduced a resolution, H. Con. Res. 59, to support the goals of National ASK Day, which falls on June 21 each year. National ASK Day encourages parents to ask other parents whether their children are playing in a house with an unlocked gun.

In the United States, 1.7 million children are in homes with loaded, unlocked guns. This initiative is supported by Head Start, the American Public Health Association, and the American Academy of Pediatrics.

In addition to these measures that I have introduced, I have also co-sponsored the Large Capacity Ammunition

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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H6797

Feeding Device Act to ban the sale of large-capacity magazines and Denying Firearms and Explosives to Dangerous Terrorists Act to prohibit individuals suspected of ties to terrorist organizations from purchasing a gun, and H.R. 2380 and H.R. 3411, which fix our broken background check system.

Any of these bills would immediately improve public safety in this country, a country that sees its citizens die at the hands of a loaded gun 297 times more than in Japan, 49 times more than in France, and 33 times more than in Israel.

Any one of these rational, common-sense proposals would immediately make life safer for men, women, and children in cities and towns across America; yet, we are going to sit on our hands because Republican leaders would rather genuflect before the National Rifle Association than do anything that could help save the lives of thousands of Americans.

The last time this institution passed a major bill to prevent gun violence was November 10, 1993, when the House approved the Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act and President Clinton signed it into law.

Mr. Speaker, I will end by saying I do not know what it will take for us to finally take action. But I do know what I will do. I will continue speaking out every week on the floor of this Chamber until we get something done that makes our communities safer and honors the lives of all the victims who have lost their lives in this country to gun violence.

AMERICA MUST STAND FIRM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. ABRAHAM) for 5 minutes.

Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. Speaker, I just wrote on the board that it has been 1,510 days since the President said that Syria's Bashar Assad must go. He is still in office.

It is 767 days since the President drew the red line in the sand that said, if Bashar Assad used chemical weapons on his own people, he must go. He is still in office.

What we are seeing in Syria—the refugees' humanitarian crisis, a bloody civil war, the rise of ISIS—is a direct response to this administration's ineptness to handle these problems.

Now we have Russia's Putin on the floor of the U.N.—on U.S. soil—saying America is weak. But we didn't need Putin to tell us that by his words. He has done it by his actions. He invaded Crimea in Ukraine because he knew that this administration would draw another red line, but do nothing about it.

America is losing her standing in the world because we would rather appease our enemies than show strength. This administration still has no strategy handling ISIS, no tangible plan to handle the Syrian problem or defeating

Assad, and certainly no plan to deal with Russia's new very powerful aggression in many areas of the world.

Assad must go. ISIS must be defeated. America must stand firm and show the world that we are a force to be reckoned with, not to be trampled on.

CELEBRATING THE LIVES OF BEN KUROKI AND SUSUMU "SUS" ITO

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Hawaii (Mr. TAKAI) for 5 minutes.

Mr. TAKAI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the lives of two trailblazers for the Asian American community, Ben Kuroki and Susumu "Sus" Ito.

After the bombing of Pearl Harbor, Kuroki and his brother were one of the first Japanese Americans to enlist in the United States Air Force during World War II at a time when over 100,000 other Japanese Americans were forced into incarceration camps without due process under the law.

The need for aerial gunners was high; so, Kuroki applied for the job, was approved, and was sent to a 2-week course in Britain. Kuroki received on-the-job training. His maiden flight was on December 13, 1942.

During this time of heavy discrimination against Japanese Americans, Kuroki's flight crew was instrumental in protecting him from the sneers and abuse by his fellow soldiers.

Kuroki received three Distinguished Flying Cross medals for volunteering to fly 25 combat missions against Germany and 28 missions in the Pacific. He was the only Japanese American to serve as an aerial gunner in the Asia-Pacific theater during World War II.

The son of Japanese immigrant farmers, Kuroki was born on May 16, 1917, in Gaithersburg, Nebraska.

After his many missions in Europe, Kuroki visited other Japanese Americans behind barbed wire to promote the military and asked other Japanese Americans to join what would soon become the 442nd Regimental Combat Team of the 100th Infantry Battalion.

Ben Kuroki exemplified the embodiment of patriotism and service above self. He often said, "I had to fight for the right to fight for my own country, and now I feel vindication."

Today I rise to share Ben Kuroki's tremendous accomplishments and dedicated public service with the House of Representatives. Ben Kuroki was the definition of an American hero.

I would also like to take this time to recognize another extraordinary trailblazer for the Japanese American community, Susumu "Sus" Ito.

Ito, the oldest and only son of Japanese immigrants, was drafted into the military in 1940. After Pearl Harbor, his parents and his sister were sent to the incarceration camp in Rohwer, Arkansas. During this time, he volunteered to become a forward observer for the 442nd Infantry Battalion, one of the

most dangerous positions in the battalion.

Known as mischievous, he brought with him to Europe an Agfa Memo, a contraband 35-millimeter camera that fit right in the palm of his hand. Ito spent his deployment in Europe, starting in 1944 until the war ended, taking pictures of his surroundings.

From playing chess during downtime to posing with the Colosseum during their trek into Rome, he spent the war revealing the daily lives of this little known mostly Japanese American unit.

However, many of Ito's pictures also accurately depicted the brazenness of war. The 442nd was one of the first battalions to reach the Dachau Concentration Camp, and Ito took pictures of dazed prisoners leaving the camp for the very first time. He also captured the despair of his fellow soldiers as they rescued the Lost Battalion.

After World War II and through the GI Bill, he started an extraordinary career as a cellular biologist and became a researcher and professor at Harvard Medical School, where he worked for over 50 years.

Ito donated his vast collection, thousands of images, to the Japanese American Museum in Los Angeles, as part of their Before They Were Heroes: Sus Ito's World War II Images collection.

In August, I had the opportunity to tour this exhibit. The images he captured constantly reminded me of the courage of our Japanese American GIs who fought valiantly for our country while their families remained behind barbed wire.

Today I rise to share Sus Ito's tremendous accomplishments and dedicated public service with the House of Representatives.

□ 1215

LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUND REAUTHORIZATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. COSTELLO) for 5 minutes.

Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, last week, the Nation saw a very important program expire, the Land and Water Conservation Fund. I rise today to encourage my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to join with me and call for a vote on a full and continued permanent reauthorization of the LWCF.

For 50 years, this critical fund has added value to my district and to so many across the Nation. Last week, inaction by Congress led to the expiration of the Land and Water Conservation Fund, and I believe it is critical that we renew our commitment to the fund.

The fund helps our communities protect critical lands by providing State and local governments with necessary funding and flexibility to develop and improve the very land on display for